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Govt planning to impose 'export emergency'

Ahsan Iqbal says special cell to be created at PM Office for addressing hurdles to achieving '40pc growth' target

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The government has planned to announce 'export emergency' in the country and create a special cell at PM Office to address problems and complaints of the business community on an urgent basis for increasing exports by 40pc in four years and by around 200pc by 2035 for sustainable economic growth and job creation.

"We will have to transform the entire system and become an export nation on an emergency basis, otherwise, the dependence on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and friendly countries for financial support would continue," said Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal at a news conference on Monday.

He conceded the country's export performance in first four months (July-October) was not satisfactory even though export grew by around 1pc. He also said there were genuine questions and impatience why GDP was not growing fast quickly but it was a pragmatism decision of the government not to rush for growth through consumerism as was done by the previous government in 2022.

To gain quick growth to 6pc in 2022, the then government facilitated consumerism by opening imports which increased growth rate but created $50bn trade deficit that evaporated the country's foreign exchange reserves and then led to massive devaluation and inflation whose impacts are felt even today despite corrective measures.

"We don't have to go for artificial growth but the one which is backed by all sectors of economy including agriculture, industry and exports for sustainable path. This can only be done through pragmatism. If we were to break free of external crutches and achieve economic independence, we have to leapfrog exports. There is no other option," he said.

The minister said a committee he led proposed comprehensive measures to the PM, including announcement for an export emergency, rapid payment of refunds and a special unit in the PM Office with a dedicated hotline tasked with listening to exporters and businesses issues for settlement on emergency basis.

He said the committee had also proposed allowing the industrialists and businesses negotiate with their employees to give up long holidays on special occasions against special incentives and payments to avoid break up production cycles. He said other proposals had been framed in consultation with 20 high priority potential sector for export growth.

He said the prime minister had taken those proposals very seriously and had constituted another committee, led by the deputy prime minister and represented by the ministries of finance, planning, economic affairs and other public and private stakeholders for implementation. These recommendations would be finalised next week and presented to the PM for an implementation strategy.

"There is no other way to gain economic sovereignty. The question is how fast we grow our exports," he said, otherwise the country would again need IMF or friendly countries' support or both.

He said the government was engaging with the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to make export plans with local chambers at district level.

The minister conceded that uncompetitive energy prices were a challenge and also because of IMF programme but these conditions should be put to best use to reform agriculture, fiscal and energy sectors in two years for accelerated growth immediately after 2027.

Govt fumes as KP CM demands proof of Afghans' role in terror

• Afridi rebuked for 'sympathising with terrorists' • Talal says state won't tolerate 'single vague word" against the national counterterrorism narrative

Dawn Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday took strong exception to remarks by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, who had challenged the government to provide evidence that Afghan soil was being used for terrorism against Pakistan.

Talking to reporters at the residence of PTI leader Alamgir Khan after the party's power show on Sunday night, the KP CM had said the state should provide evidence for its claim that Afghanistan's soil was being used for terrorism in Pakistan.

He claimed that other countries also shared a border with Afghanistan, but they did not have the same complaints.

The clip was also shared by state broadcaster *PTV* on the social media platform X.

Later on Monday, while addressing the Sindh High Court Bar Association, the KP chief minister said that national institutions were being weakened, asserting that the Constitution and the legal system were being "openly toyed with".

He told lawyers he had reached Karachi on the PTI founder's direction to organise a street movement, following the "theft" of party's election mandate, claiming cover of the constitutional right to dissent.

"We have to fight for our rights ourselves," he said. "We are being cornered, so the only way left is for us to protest."

While he had appreciated the welcome he received from the provincial government days earlier, CM Afridi accused the PPP-led Sindh government of "discriminatory treatment" against him and his guests, claiming that local authorities insulted cultural symbols, including the Sindhi topi and ajrak.

FLANKED by PTI secretary general Salman Akram Raja and others, KP CM Sohail Afridi attends a Sindh High Court Bar Association event.—PPI

CM Afridi noted that the public looked to the judiciary for protection against injustice, yet court orders remained unimplemented. He alleged that a jail superintendent ignored directives from three Islamabad High Court judges allowing him to visit incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan.

State minister response

The KP CM's quest for proof of Afghans' role in terrorism elicited a swift rebuke from State Minister for Interior Senator Talal Chaudhry, who cautioned on Monday that any political leader making "vague or sympathetic statements" regarding terrorists would be subject to severe consequences.

He added the government would not tolerate even a "single vague word" against the national counter-terrorism narrative.

Speaking to reporters outside Parliament House, Mr Chaudhry said that while parties were free to launch street movements, no one would be allowed to create space for terrorists who had targeted mosques, schools and security forces.

"If anyone tries to build a narrative for them or adopt a soft attitude, it is intolerable," he said. "If you have so much sympathy for them, go to Afghanistan yourself or we will facilitate it."

The minister also launched a critique of the KP government. He claimed that over 1,200 people had been killed in terrorism incidents, with "60-70pc of attacks occurring in KP in 2025," marking the highest toll in Pakistan's history.

"You deliberately did not spend on counter-terrorism institutions," Mr Chaudhry said, accusing the provincial leadership of believing that disorder weakens the state, allowing them to "blackmail" the government.

Mr Chaudhry reiterated that there was no space for those who sympathised with terrorists.

"Anyone supporting terrorists will face the same treatment as terrorists," he said. "No one will be allowed to play with Pakistan's blood — not with weapons and not with narratives."

With input from Ishaq Tanoli in Karachi and the APP news agency

Indian rocket hits snag during launch

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU: An Indian rocket hit a snag during its launch on Monday, forcing a deviation in flight path as it carried an Earth observation satellite and commercial payloads, the country's space agency said.

It was a second disappointment for the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle in about eight months, denting its reputation for reliability, with a more than 90 per cent success rate over about 60 past missions.

The PSLV-C62, a four-stage launch vehicle, "encountered an anomaly" towards the end of the third stage, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) posted on X, without saying exactly what went wrong. "A detailed analysis has been initiated," it added. A livestream of the launch shows the rocket blasting into the sky. However, a glitch led to a deviation in its flight path, ISRO chief V Narayanan said.

The PSLV-C62 lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on the island of Sriharikota at 10:18am local time, carrying the EOS-N1 observation satellite and 15 other payloads developed by startups and academic institutions in India and abroad.

The ISRO's mission control said the rocket performed normally for most of the flight before an unexpected disturbance and deviation from its path.

"Close to the end of the third stage, we are seeing a little more disturbance in the vehicle," Narayanan told India's state broadcaster *Doordarshan*. "Subsequently, there is a deviation observed in the vehicle flight path."—Agencies

Indonesia expresses desire to expand defence ties with Pakistan

Dawn Report

RAWALPINDI: Indonesia has expressed its desire to further expand defence ties with Pakistan across multiple domains, the military's media affairs wing said on Monday.

The development came as Indonesian Defence Minister Lieutenant General (retd) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin called on Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, the Inter-Services Public Relations said.

"The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, evolving regional and global security dynamics, and exploration of avenues for enhancing bilateral defence cooperation," it said.

INDONESIAN Defence Minister retired Lt Gen Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin calls on CDF Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at GHQ.—Courtesy ISPR

"Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening institutional linkages, training collaboration and defence industrial cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia," it added.

"The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. He also expressed Indonesia's desire to further expand defence ties with Pakistan across multiple domains," it said.

CDF Field Marshal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering a strong and enduring defence relationship with Indonesia, based on shared values, mutual respect, and convergence of strategic interests, the statement concluded.

The development comes months after Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto visited Pakistan, with the two countries agreeing to enhance bilateral trade, expand cooperation in health, agriculture, information technology, science and education, and deepen coordination on regional and global issues, including Palestine.

'AI, geopolitics and online fraud reshaping cyber risk landscape'

• WEF report says artificial intelligence 'supercharging both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities' • Notes cybersecurity has become a 'core strategic concern' for govts, businesses and societies • Highlights cyber-enabled fraud has become a 'pervasive threat'

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Artificial intelligence, geopolitical fragmentation and a surge in cyber-enabled fraud are redefining the global cyber risk landscape at unprecedented speed, according to a report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Monday.

"Cybersecurity [this year] is accelerating amid growing threats, geopolitical fragmentation and a widening technological divide. AI is transforming cyber on both sides of the fight — strengthening defence while enabling more sophisticated attacks," the report, titled 'Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2026', says.

It adds that organisations are striving to balance innovation with security by embracing AI and automation at scale, even as governance frameworks and human expertise struggle to keep pace.

The result is a fast-evolving, metamorphic landscape where disruptions move swiftly across borders, even as technology offers new potential for resilience.

According to the outlook, geopolitics will remain the top factor influencing cyber risk mitigation strategies in 2026. Around 64 per cent of organisations are accounting for geopolitically motivated cyberattacks — such as critical infrastructure disruption and espionage.

This year, the report says, cybersecurity will continue to evolve across technological, geopolitical, economic and strategic dimensions.

"In this landscape, cybersecurity is no longer a backroom technical function; it is a core strategic concern for governments, businesses and societies," it adds.

'Pervasive threat'

Developed in collaboration with Accenture, the report highlights that cyber-enabled fraud has become a pervasive threat. "This shift underscores the growing societal and economic impact of fraud as it spreads across regions and sectors," it says.

It also underscores how AI is supercharging both offensive and defensive cyber capabilities. "Geopolitical fragmentation is further compounding these risks, reshaping cybersecurity strategies and widening preparedness gaps across regions."

The new findings point to a cyber landscape undergoing profound structural shifts, where cyber resilience can no longer be treated as a technical issue alone but as a strategic requirement. AI-related vulnerabilities rose faster than any other category in 2025, with 87pc of respondents reporting an increase. Data leaks linked to generative AI (34pc) and advancing adversarial capabilities (29pc) are among the leading concerns for 2026.

Meanwhile, 94pc of leaders expect AI to be the most consequential force shaping cybersecurity this year. Organisations are responding, nearly doubling the share assessing AI security, from 37pc to 64pc.

Supply chains remain a major systemic vulnerability. Among large companies, 65pc cite third-party and supply chain risks as their greatest cyber resilience barrier, up from 54pc last year. Concentration risk is also intensifying, with incidents at major cloud and internet service providers demonstrating how infrastructure-level failures can trigger widespread downstream impacts across interconnected digital ecosystems.

"As cyber risks become more interconnected and consequential, cyber-enabled fraud has emerged as one of the most disruptive forces in the digital economy, undermining trust and directly affecting people's lives," said WEF MD Director Jeremy Jurgens.

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